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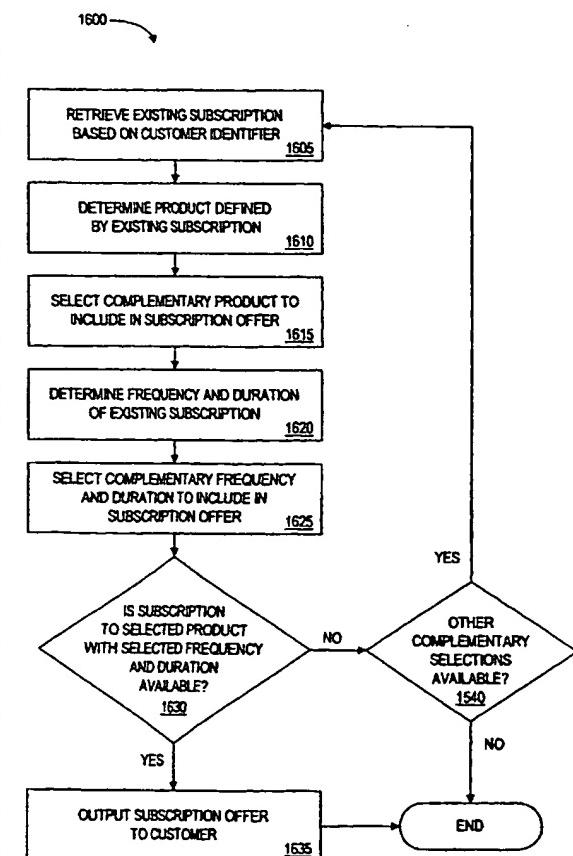
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09/221,457 28 December 1998 (28.12.1998) US(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US):  
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*[Continued on next page]*

(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DETERMINING A SUBSCRIPTION TO A PRODUCT IN A RETAIL ENVIRONMENT



(57) Abstract: A method and apparatus for managing a subscription to a product in a retail environment, wherein the product for which a subscription is offered is selected based on the customer's historical purchases. The subscription defines a price for the selected product, wherein the subscription price is lower than the retail price of the product. The subscription specifies conditions which the customer has to meet in order to remain entitled to receive the subscription price for purchases of the product. Such conditions typically include a required frequency of purchases for a required period of time. The conditions of the subscription are selected so as to maximize the customer's visits to the business offering the subscription without unnecessarily eroding the profits of the business.

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## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No  
PCT/US 99/27709

**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**  
**IPC 7 G06F17/60**

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

**B. FIELDS SEARCHED**

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)  
**IPC 7 G06F**

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, INSPEC, PAJ, IBM-TDB

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	<p>US 5 644 723 A (DEATON DAVID W ET AL) 1 July 1997 (1997-07-01)</p> <p>abstract            column 12, paragraph 1.3            column 70, line 44 -column 71, line 29            column 85, line 38 - line 60            column 94, line 54 - line 67            column 104, line 29 - line 33            figures 2A,15A,15B</p> <p style="text-align: center;">—</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-/-</p>	1,8-10, 12, 23-25, 28-32, 35,36, 57,58, 61,62

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

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X	WO 97 23838 A (CATALINA MARKETING INT ;SCROGGIE MICHAEL C (US); KACABA MICHAEL E) 3 July 1997 (1997-07-03)	30-32, 58,62
A	abstract page 6, line 13 - line 24 page 19, line 14 -page 20, line 14 figure 1	1,57,61
A	WO 98 28699 A (MERIDIAN ENTERPRISES INC) 2 July 1998 (1998-07-02) abstract page 10, line 2 -page 11, line 10	1,30,57, 58,61,62
A	US 5 297 026 A (HOFFMAN FRANK) 22 March 1994 (1994-03-22) abstract column 1, line 65 -column 3, line 45 figure 3	1,30,57, 58,61,62

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Information on patent family members

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